



Lesson Summaries

SOCIAL STUDIES

Lesson

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UNIT 6 – History of the Caribbean Family

History of the Indian Family in the Caribbean

INTRODUCTION

History often repeats itself. When the East Indian indentured servants came to Trinidad and Tobago and other islands in the Caribbean, they brought with them their rich culture and beliefs. Although they were not treated well by the Europeans they were still allowed to keep many aspects of their lives from India.

The East Indians brought Hinduism and Islam to the Caribbean. Both these religions encouraged formal marriages. This resulted in East Indians having religiously recognised unions. This type of union was also examined thoroughly in a past lesson. You may be wondering how this impacted their family life. For the East Indian population of today legal marriages are quite common. This is as a result of the impact of the past.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

Identify and discuss the impacts of major historical events on the family life of existing ethnic groups



INDENTURESHIP

With East Indian indentureship came the introduction of barrack housing or ranges. Picture long buildings with several rooms, divided by a very thin wall. Within one room there could be an entire family.

Can you imagine how difficult this could be for those who were forced to live in these conditions? When new ranges were built for the Indians they became known as *bound yard*.

Married workers objected bitterly to this kind of housing. Real family life could only be possible in separate cottages. By the 1930's barrack houses were fading out gradually for the married workers.



ACTIVITY 1

Turn to page 16 of your text *Social Studies for the Caribbean* and do question [c]

INDENTURESHIP (CONT'D)

At the end of the Indentureship period, Indians were given plots of land on which to continue living. This historical event resulted in Indians living in small family-based rural communities, away from other races in society. Can you see evidence of this today?

Their choice to move away from other races was their way of avoiding confrontations. They could also continue in the agriculture sector.

East Indians lived mainly in extended families. They came here in large numbers and their closeness meant security. This was also the reality in British Guiana (Guyana).

Even today one can find East Indian communities where families live in extended units, parents, grandparents and children live together in the same house or within very close proximity to each other.



ACTIVITY 2

Locate on a map of Trinidad rural communities which are mainly occupied by East Indians.

CONCLUSION

East Indian Indentureship brought with it religious unions, nuclear families and extended family patterns. It resulted in communities with a large percentage of East Indians and mainly family based.